
Security Assistance Programs: The Catalyst for Transition in the Croatian Military

By

**Major Richard B. Liebl, U.S. Army
Marin Braovac,
Andrijana Jelic,
Office of Defense Zagreb, Croatia**

In general terms, the Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC) and security assistance programs continue to play a vital role in advising and assisting the Croatian Ministry of Defense in their efforts to become a more professional and modern force. The Office of Defense Cooperation's marching orders are to continue to support U.S. policy objectives in Croatia and the region and vigorously pursue security assistance programs to bring Croatia in line with its stated strategic objective, full North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership. This will be accomplished by the following: enhancing the professionalization and democratization of the Croatian Armed Forces through the international military education and training (IMET) program; assisting Croatia with its modernization effort through foreign military sales (FMS) assisted with funding through foreign military financing (FMF), promoting direct commercial sales (DCS), providing excess defense articles (EDA) and finally by promoting good will through United States European Command (EUCOM) funded humanitarian assistance programs.

Foreign Military Sales (FMS) Program

On April 8, 1999 Croatia was eligible to use the FMS program, Croatia initiated two cases and submitted a letter of request (LOR) for JANUS and SPECTRUM combat simulation software. Letters of offer and acceptance (LOAs) were signed on November 4, 1999 making them the first FMS cases ever established within the Republic of Croatia. Croatia established two more cases, one for Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) logistics publications to assist the ministry of defense (MOD) in the transition to the NATO codification system (NCS), and a second case for aircrew items and equipment for the Croatian Air Force. Using the FMS program all four cases have been financed.

Effective October 1, 1999, Croatia became an eligible user of FMF grant funds. In fiscal year 2000, Croatia received \$ 4.0 million and in fiscal year 2001 Croatia received \$3.9 million in FMF funding. This year Croatia is expected to receive approximately \$5.0 million. Croatia has committed to use fiscal year 2000 FMF funds for a Multi-Integrated Laser Engagement System 2000, combat training simulations equipment, costing approximately 2.6 million and a ITT Mercury Wideband Network Radio (RT-1812) to transmit data from newly acquired radars to recipient platforms, costing approximately \$1.5 million. Being new to the FMS program, Croatia has established a few small FMS cases. The request for the MILES and RT-1812 equipment will be crucial in establishing confidence in the FMS system.

Croatian Armed Forces Modernization Effort

In April 2002, the Croatian government is planning to begin the reorganization process of their armed forces, which should reduce the current active duty force of over 40,000 personnel to 21,000 over the next five years. Simultaneously, the MoD will start a modernization process, which will probably include:

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- Upgrade of communication systems with high frequency, very high frequency, ultrahigh frequency and single-channel ground air radio system (SINCGARS) tactical radios,
 - Upgrade of helicopter fleet (MI8 and MI24),
 - Upgrade of MIG-21 (contract had already been signed with Romania),
 - Air Sovereignty Operations Center,
 - Night vision devices,
 - Engineer equipment,
 - Nuclear, biological and chemical equipment,
 - Air defense artillery systems, and
 - Ground transportation.

Some of these programs will use the FMS and FMF programs; some will go through direct commercial sales to take advantage of possible offset arrangements. Some of the modernization efforts have already been awarded to non United States government contractors, as is the case with the current MIG-21 modernization program. For more sufficient operational management of FMS, DCS, and EDA programs, the Office of Defense Cooperation Zagreb established a small office adjacent to the Ministry of Defense Department for Acquisition and Procurement. This allows daily communication with the Assistant Minister for Acquisition and Procurement who is responsible for all procurement activities.

Direct Commercial Sales

The Office of Defense Cooperation assists various U.S. defense contractors seeking business opportunities in Croatia. The Office of Defense Cooperation's assistance is basically to establish contact with Ministry of Defense senior officials, organize presentations, and ensure that U.S. defense contractors have equal opportunities to potential markets. It is very important to say that the ODC assists U.S. defense contractors upon contractor request, free of charge and in good will. The table below shows the numbers and types of programs presented by U.S. defense contractors and companies:

<u>Company</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Status</u>
Bell	Bell 206 Helicopters	Delivered fiscal year 1998
Lockheed Martin	FPS-117 Radars	On-going project
Metrics System Corporation	Peregrine Radars	On-going project
MPRI	Military training	On-going project
Raytheon	ADA systems/C2	Briefed MoD and Air Force officials
Harris	Tactical radios	Proposed offer on the MoD international tender
ITT	Tactical radios	Proposed offer on the MoD international tender
Telephonic	C2 Systems	Briefed MoD officials
Tradeways	NBC Equipment	Briefed MoD officials
Sikrosky	Helicopters	Briefed MoD and Air Force officials
Cubic	Simulations/training	Briefed MoD and Army officials
MIC Industries		Briefed government officials

*Rockwell Collins	Communication Systems	Established contact with MoD but did not come to Croatia
*EXIM Bank		Discussed possible cooperation with MoD officials
*Established contact with MoD without ODC involvement		

International Military Education and Training

After the Dayton Accords were signed in 1995, Croatia began restructuring its Army, Navy, and Air Force/Air Defense to meet peacetime needs. Croatia has four clearly articulated goals for its foreign training programs. First, Croatia wants to develop a civil-military system that gives the military an appropriate role in a civil society. Second, Croatia wants a professionally trained military capable of sustaining its own training process. Third, Croatia wants to have a resource management system that is efficient and effective. Finally, Croatia wants all systems to be interoperable with NATO systems. To achieve these goals, the Croatians have identified a number of training priorities:

- Senior level schooling,
- Strategic planning and policy,
- Defense systems planning and process, and
- Training and doctrine.

The IMET Program in Croatia is regarded by many as the most significant and successful U.S. and Croatian engagement tool. The value Croatia has put on U.S. training since 1995 should not be underestimated. The Croatians support the IMET program with two dollars of their money for every dollar dedicated to it by Congress, paying for all of the travel and living expenses for their students. This funding policy is the result of a military need to train the largest number of officers possible. This single policy has effectively tripled the size of their program, making it one of the largest in Europe.

Since 1995, Croatia has sent 304 students for training in the U.S. and hundreds more trained in country through Mobile Education/Training Team (MET) visits. Since 1999, every major command, every sector of the general staff and the defense ministry has someone who has attended training abroad. The Navy and Air Force, in particular, use their graduates very well placing them in command, instructor, or senior staff positions.

How has IMET funded training enhanced the professionalism of Croatian soldiers? The Croatian military greatly admires U.S. training. Croatian soldiers focus on their IMET experience as the catalyst for changes made in the Croatian military. How has IMET contributed to defense resource management, civilian control of the military and respect for human rights? Civilian control of the military and defense resource management are two of the primary goals for the Croatian military. Most if not all courses selected by Croatia tend to contribute to these two objectives.

English Language Training

Recognized as a major objective to support Croatia's future in the NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP), English language training (ELT) will continue to take on an increased importance during the Croatian armed forces transition. Through the IMET Program, Defense Language Institute English Language Center (DLIELC) has assisted the Croatian armed forces with its

english language training since 1995. U.S. support to the Croatian School of Foreign Languages has been in three areas:

- Language labs/instruction materials
- Language Instructor Training
- General, Advanced and Specialized English Language Training

Through IMET, three (level II) language labs were delivered to the School of Foreign Languages, two in Zagreb and one in their extension center in Split. Four new (level IV) language labs, valued at close to \$100,000 each were purchased with IMET supplemental monies in fiscal year 2001 and are expected to be delivered this year. Also, \$75,000 worth of instruction materials for the school were purchased in late 2001 through IMET supplemental monies, or “Q-year” money. With reference to support through language training, DLIELC has trained ten language instructors and over sixty military personnel since implementation of the IMET program in 1995.

Humanitarian Assistance

The ODC works closely with U.S. Agency for International Development on all humanitarian assistance projects. The ODC continues to use the humanitarian assistance program to support the country team’s objective of helping to create the conditions supporting the return of refugees to war devastated areas. Humanitarian Assistance Program - Other, Humanitarian Assistance Program - Excess Property, and Humanitarian Civic Action projects support the missions goal of ensuring that all displaced persons and refugees from or currently in Croatia are able to exercise their right to return voluntarily to communities of origin under conditions of security. These programs help provide the infrastructure and supplies needed to effect that goal.

In fiscal year 2000 ODC Zagreb effected delivery of \$108, 000 U.S. dollars of humanitarian assistance excess property (non-pharmaceutical medical supplies and office supplies) to the International Rescue Committee Knin and the General Hospital in Vukovar. Also in fiscal year 2000, five school restoration and renovation projects were initiated in conjunction with U.S. Agency for International Development. Three of the projects have recently been completed. Fiscal year 2001 reconstruction projects have been completed including rebuilding of the fire station in Vukovar and repair to the secondary school in Petrinja. In fiscal year 2001, humanitarian assistance excess property shipment in excess of \$45,000 was delivered to IRC Knin (consisting of medical supplies, and office supplies) and recreation equipment was donated to the Klasje orphanage in Osijek. The ODC delivered an excess U.S. Army ambulance for donation to the hospital in Vukovar and donated \$100,000 dollars worth of demining equipment to the Croatian Mine Action Center.

About the Authors

Major Richard Liebl is the Chief for the Office of Defense Cooperation in Zagreb, Croatia. In 1999 he served as the Commander for Special Operations Command and Control Element-North (SOCCE-N) as part of Operation Joint Forge. Liebl is a graduate of Columbus State University and has earned a Master of Arts degree in West European Studies from Indiana University. He was commissioned as an Infantry Officer and served in the 25th Infantry Division (Light). In 1991 he graduated from Special Forces Detachment Officer Qualification Course and served in the 3d Special Forces Group (Airborne). Major Liebl has conducted Foreign Area Officer training, and attended DLI for Dutch/Flemish and In-Country Training in the Netherlands.

Since October 2000, Marin Braovac has been working for the Office of Defense Cooperation. His current position allows him to coordinate directly with the Croatian Ministry of Defense and

U.S. defense industries on all matters concerning the foreign military sales program and direct commercial sales program. He has worked for USEUCOM and the FMS/DCS/EDA Program Manager in the Office of Defense Cooperation. He graduated from the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Political Science in March 1996 and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science. In 1991 Braovac served in the 114th Infantry Brigade of the Croatian Army. In 1997 Braovac served as a Lieutenant in the Croatian Army and was assigned to the Military-Technical Council of the Ministry of Defense as a Senior Consultant/IMET Coordinator. In 1998 Braovac was assigned as an Advisor for International Military Education Programs in the Department of Defense Policy, Division of International Military Cooperation, Croatian Ministry of Defense.